

COLÉGIO MILITAR DO RIO DE JANEIRO

LEVEL: ItB

**HOW TO USE
A
DICTIONARY**
(COMPILED BY TEACHER ÂNGELA CRISTINA)



2007

1. REASONS FOR USING A DICTIONARY WHEN LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE - SURVEY

- a) What do you use a dictionary for?
- b) In which situations do you use a dictionary?
- c) When is it a good idea to use a dictionary and when is it a bad idea to use one?
- d) Check the kind of information you can find in a dictionary.
 - ☐ Spelling
 - ☐ Pronunciation
 - ☐ Definition
 - ☐ Synonyms/Antonyms
 - ☐ Appropriateness of usage
 - ☐ Part of speech
 - ☐ Grammar
 - ☐ Collocations
 - ☐ History
 - ☐ Phonetics/Phonology
 - ☐ Etymology
 - ☐ Picture
 - ☐ Cultural notes
 - ☐ Others: _____
- e) List the types of dictionary you know (or have used before).
- f) What do you find difficult about using dictionaries?

2. MORE THAN ONE MEANING

A. Look up the underlined words in a dictionary. Sometimes words which look the same have several completely different meanings. Which meanings given in the dictionary fit the uses of the words here?

1. What's the name of the book you're reading?

2. We took the train to London, but it was expensive.

3. The weather's too nice to stay inside and watch television all day.

4. They've just bought a flat near the city centre.

5. What's your number? I'll give you a ring tonight.

6. I was in bed with a cold for two days.

7. We're going to see a play by a new author next week.

8. No sugar, thanks. I don't like sweet drinks.

B. Now complete these sentences using the underlined words from the eight sentences above.

- a. It's really _____ of you to offer to take us to the station.
- b. I think my _____ is fast. Have you got the right time?
- c. It's a popular place. I think it's a good idea to _____ in advance.
- d. They're professionals. They have to _____ every day.
- e. They say that Holland is a _____ country.
- f. Please put your toys away after you _____ with them.
- g. He bought her a diamond _____.
- h. The coffee has gone _____. Could I have another?

3. WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN (use your notebook to write the answers)

- a. climate and weather
- b. less and fewer
- c. big and huge
- d. fair and honest
- e. sport and recreation
- f. lay and lie
- g. profession and occupation
- h. goals and aims
- i. overcast and cloudy
- j. flutter and flap

4. USING A DICTIONARY

A dictionary is a very important tool for anyone who is learning a new language. To be a good dictionary user, however, it is not enough to know what to use the dictionary for. You must also decide which is the best dictionary for any purpose you may have.

Match the columns.

TYPES OF DICTIONARIES

DEFINITIONS

(A) The bilingual dictionary

() It can be either monolingual or bilingual. Bilingual dictionaries of this type are useful when seeking a translation in the foreign language. Translations either from or into the foreign language can be imprecise but more specialized dictionaries may solve this deficiency. Semantic dictionaries which group together words from a similar field, such as for example all words to do with computing or bricklaying, also attempt to avoid possible problems of one to one translation or simple definitions.

(B) The monolingual dictionary

() It helps analyzing the development of a word

(C) The specialist and technical dictionary

() Whether for native-speaker or language learner use, it gives definitions of individual words rather than a translation. This can cause problems for the beginning language learner if the defining vocabulary is not restricted in some way. A good dictionary of this type will provide information about word use, about the range of meanings and grammatical constraints.

(D) The etymological dictionary

() It can be a useful learning tool especially for the beginner but as translation it is used to indicate meaning rather than a definition, aspect which can turn them imprecise and the information they contain rather restricted. A good dictionary of this type, however, will give a range of relevant meanings, examples of use, synonyms and antonyms, and basic grammatical information.

5. KNOWING WHICH DICTIONARIES TO USE

If you are looking up an English word, it's often best to use a good monolingual dictionary. Then you will not have to keep switching between two languages in your mind, and you will get extra reading practice. However, if this is taking you a long time or if your English is not good enough to understand the definitions, then it's better to use a bilingual dictionary. And, of course, you have to use a bilingual dictionary when you want to know the English translation of a word in your language.

But don't forget: it's important to start using a monolingual dictionary as soon as possible after finishing a basic course in a foreign language, so that you can get used to and enjoy the benefits of it.

Quiz



Match the columns according to the meaning of the words below. Number 7 has been done for you.

1. fuel		()	The prevailing style or custom, as in dress or behaviour.
2. gossip		()	To descend to the bottom; submerge.
3. endless		()	Something consumed to produce energy.
4. indoor		()	Seeming to be without an end or limit.
5. mood		()	Written contract or insurance.
6. fashion		(7)	A device that produces electricity.
7. battery		()	Rumor or talk of a personal, sensational, or intimate nature.
8. smoke		()	A favorable occasion; an opportunity.
9. abstract		()	A state of mind or emotion.
10. tide		()	A low single seat as in cars or planes.
11. sink		()	Considered apart from concrete existence.
12. policy		()	To cover or furnish with a helmet.
13. holder		()	A cloud of fine particles.
14. helm		()	Intended for use in the interior o a building.
15. bucket seat		()	A device for holding.

(Extracted from Crosswords – puzzles in English, nr 8, Edições Coquetel, Ediouro: Rio de Janeiro, dec/2004.)

6. FINDING THE RIGHT MEANING OF AN ENGLISH WORD

Very often, when you look up a new English word, you find that it has more than one meaning. If you are not sure which one is correct, here's what you can do.

- First, check through all the meanings and find the one that makes most sense in the context where you found the word.
- Second, if you really want to make sure, think what the word is in your own language and look it up in a bilingual dictionary. If one of the English translations is the original word you looked up, then you can be satisfied that you have found the right meaning.

7. FINDING THE RIGHT SPELLING

Another problem you may have is when you want to check the spelling but you can't find the word you're looking for. What can you do?

- If you are sure of the first few letters, just look down the page until you find the right spelling. (Again, it is helpful to check the meaning is the one you expect.)

- If you are not sure of the first few letters, try some other possibilities. You know, for example, that some words that start with an *-n* sound have *k* as their first letter (e.g. knife, knight). So, if you can't find the word under *N*, try looking in the *K* pages.
- If you still can't find the word, think what it is in your language and look it up in your bilingual dictionary.

8. FINDING THE RIGHT ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF A WORD IN YOUR LANGUAGE

When you look up a word in your own language in a bilingual dictionary, you will probably find that there is more than one English translation. If you are not sure which to use, you could try a *back translation*. This means that you look up the English translations one by one in a monolingual dictionary. If a word has a definition that matches the word in your language, you are safe to use it.

9. KNOWING WHEN TO USE THE DICTIONARY

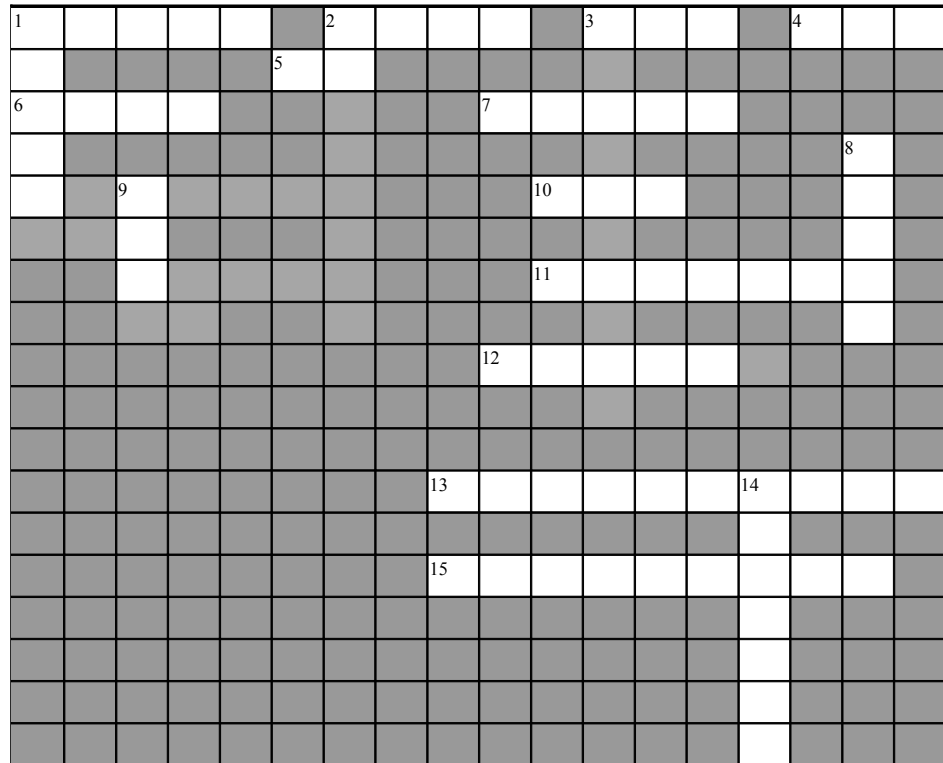
If you look up every word you see or hear, you will spend your whole day with the dictionary in your hand. You have to be clever and choose the right words to check and the right time to do it. Try to follow the advice below and you will become a much more efficient language learner.

- When you find a new word while reading, finish the sentence (better: the paragraph). If you haven't guessed the meaning of the word and it still seems important, then you can look it up.
- When you hear a new word in class (or the teacher has written it on the board), wait and continue listening. What the teacher says next may help you to understand the word. If you look in your dictionary, you will not hear what comes next, and this will make understanding the lesson more and more difficult. If you think the word is very important, you can copy it from the board or write how you think it is spelled. Then later you can ask the teacher or another student what it means.



CROSSWORD PUZZLE GAMES

Your Crossword Puzzle



ACROSS

1. By yourself.
2. Put (?): bring to an end.
3. Court action.
4. Put (?): delay
5. Therefore.
6. One time.
7. Substance used in bread.
10. Support; help.
11. Restricted or isolated.
12. A narrow piece.
13. Special favours.
15. Exactly alike.

DOWN

1. Forward.
2. Dictatorial.
3. Paper, pen and pencil.
8. To rotate very fast.
9. Tell a small lie.
14. Forgiven for

KEY

2. MORE THAN ONE MEANING

A.

1. What's the name of the book you're reading?

Physical object consisting of a number of pages bound together.

2. We took the train to London, but it was expensive.

Public transport provided by a line of railway cars coupled together and drawn by a locomotive.

3. The weather's too nice to stay inside and watch television all day.

See or watch.

4. They've just bought a flat near the city centre.

A suite of rooms usually on one floor of an apartment house.

5. What's your number? I'll give you a ring tonight.

A (telephone) call.

6. I was in bed with a cold for two days.

A mild viral infection involving the nose and respiratory passages (but not the lungs).

7. We're going to see a play by a new author next week.

A dramatic work intended for performance by actors on a stage.

8. No sugar, thanks. I don't like sweet drinks.

With sweetening added.

B.

a. SWEET

b. WATCH

c. BOOK

d. TRAIN

e. COLD

f. PLAY

g. RING

h. COLD

Quiz

1. (6)
2. (11)
3. (1)
4. (3)
5. (12)
6. (7)
7. (13)
8. (2)
9. (10)
10. (5)
11. (15)
12. (9)
13. (14)
14. (8)
15. (4)

Your Crossword Puzzle

